

National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE December 22, 2008, 2008 08-40 Glen Canyon National Recreation Area 691 Scenic View Dr. PO Box 1507 Page, AZ 86040-1507

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HALLS CROSSING MARINA FIRE UPDATE

Page, AZ – State and federal agencies investigating last week's fire in a Utah marina at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area say fewer boats were destroyed – 15, not 20 as originally thought – in the late- night blaze. Of those, three vessels sank, at least one of them in water 200 feet deep.

A total of 153 water craft were docked at the Halls Crossing Marina, about 95 river miles up Lake Powell from Glen Canyon Dam, when the fire broke out sometime after 11 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 18. The fire destroyed the marina's "F" dock, charring boat slips and melting part of the roof covering the dock. A few other boats sustained minor damage, but most were saved by the quick actions of those who first responded to the fire, including National Park Service and marina concessions staff and other volunteers.

An initial assessment estimated the value of the loss of boats and facilities at between \$3 million and \$5 million, said Max King, Glen Canyon spokesman and acting public affairs officer. The remains of those boats and some of the others have been moved to a secure area for examination by investigators from the Utah State Fire Marshal's office and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF), which is assisting because the fire was at a federal facility.

The remains of "F" dock, one of six sets of docks at the marina, are cordoned off and not open to boats or the public. The portion of "D" dock containing boat slips numbered II and higher also is off-limits, according to the marina concessioner, by order of the fire investigators. King said that prohibition includes all individuals, slip holders and insurance company representatives.

King said that in their initial examination of the fire scene, investigators found no evidence that the fire was deliberately set. The Utah fire marshal continues to categorize the fire's cause as unknown.

"Indications are that it's going to take some time to find the cause," King said, noting that the "marine environment" of the fire will make determining its origins more complicated. King said investigators have left the scene for now but will return after the first of the year to continue their work. Their work is expected to continue into February. The marina is in one of the more remote locales of the recreation area, which

encompasses more than 1.25 million acres in southern Utah and northern Arizona along the course of the Colorado River.

"As we move into the investigation phase, the role of the National Park Service is shifting to assistance as needed and securing the scene," King said. Scott Ryan, chief ranger at Natural Bridges National Monument about 60 miles from Halls Crossing, has begun to assess the site for any potential environmental damage so that appropriate clean- up measures can take place.

King said that anyone with information about the fire or needing to contact investigators should do so through the Utah State Fire Marshal's office. The phone number is 801-284-6350.

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